



56th Season • 532nd Production
JULIANNE ARGYROS STAGE / JANUARY 5-26, 2020

South Coast Repertory

David Ivers
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Paula Tomei
MANAGING DIRECTOR

David Emmes & Martin Benson
FOUNDING ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

presents

FIREFLIES

by Donja R. Love

Vicki Smith
SCENIC DESIGN

David Kay Mickelsen
COSTUME DESIGN

Don Darnutzer
LIGHTING DESIGN

Scott W. Edwards
SOUND DESIGN

Jeffrey Elias Teeter
PROJECTIONS

Macelle Mahala
DRAMATURG

Joanne DeNaut, CSA
CASTING

Alyssa Escalante
STAGE MANAGER

Directed by
Lou Bellamy

World Premiere Presented By Atlantic Theater Company, New York City, 2018.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Olivia *Christiana Clark*
Charles *Lester Purry*

SETTING

Fall 1963. Somewhere down South, where the sky is on fire.

LENGTH

Approximately 90 minutes with no intermission.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Production Assistant *Anna Klevit*
Costume Design Assistant *Julie Carr*
Light Board Operator *Sean Deuel*
Sound Board Operator *Jim Lupercio*
Video Programmer *Abraham Lopez*
Dresser *Raven Loc*
Additional Costume Staff *Kaler Navazo*

The Actors and Stage Managers employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

Please refrain from unwrapping candy or making other noises that may disturb surrounding patrons and the actors.

Videotaping and/or recording of this performance by any means whatsoever are strictly prohibited.

Electronic devices should be turned off or set to non-audible mode during the performance. Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the theatre.

Photos may be taken before and after the show, and during intermission, but not during the performance.

Show your appreciation for the play by using the hashtag #FirefliesSCR and tagging the designers listed on P1.

Developed, in part, with the support of Rising Circle Theater Collective
at the INKtank Play Development Lab for Emerging Artists of Color.

Freedom is Never Really Won

by Macelle Mahala

Although *Fireflies* is set in 1963, there are several parallel social problems and concerns facing Americans today. A huge surge in domestic terrorism by white supremacists, horrific racial violence and hatred directed towards black and brown children, and illegal surveillance of private citizens are just a few issues germane to both 1963 and today. Like Olivia and Charles, the two characters in *Fireflies*, people today are also seeking ways to process and cope with the trauma of our present political and so-



cial climate, a trauma disproportionately felt by people of color and the poor. Just as in 1963, many people today working for social justice are women, people of color and members of the LGBTQI community. *Fireflies* playwright Donja R. Love recently pointed out that two out of the three black women who founded the Black Lives Matter movement are queer and that black women have been at the forefront of every major social movement in America. Despite this fact, these women are often eclipsed in the media by coverage of their male colleagues. Olivia is one such woman. She is Charles' wife, partner and speech writer, but because of the social conventions of the time period, she is expected to stand in the shadows of Charles' limelight. Part of Olivia's journey in this play involves learning to step into her power and to push back against her own erasure.

Fireflies is also part of a trilogy of plays focused on queer love through black history. Very few queer individuals active during the Civil Rights Movement were transparent about their identities because of the strong social stigma and legal repercussions they faced. For example, Bayard Rustin, one of the organizers of the March on Washington, was involuntarily outed by the police. Many members of the Southern Christian Leadership Council tried to conceal the fact that he was a homosexual for fear that the public disparagement of Rustin would extend, by association, to disparagement of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



The celebrated playwright and activist Lorraine Hansberry also lived closeted, but wrote anonymously for the first subscription lesbian publication in the U.S., *The Ladder*: Because of social stigma and legal persecution, the historical record of the contributions of queer individuals to social justice movements is shrouded and incomplete. Love's plays imagine stories of black life lost to history because of the ubiquity of heteronormative patriarchal practices. Although the characters in *Fireflies* are fictional, they mark the presence of real people whose stories we may never know.

Like many Americans, I grew up learning about the Civil Rights Movement in school during Black History Month. After delving into the research materials for this play (as dramaturg for the production), I realized how little I actually knew about this time period.

For example, although I knew King was assassinated, I didn't know the extent of the violence that he and his family lived with. His home was bombed while his wife and child were inside, he was stabbed in the chest and also struck in the head with a rock; and yet, he continued fighting for freedom and preaching non-violence. As Harry Belafonte and Stanley Levison stated at his funeral, "In a nation tenaciously racist, a black man sensitized its somnolent conscience...In the luminescent glare of the open streets, he gave a lesson to the nation revealing who was the oppressed and who was the oppressor.



He was incontestably one of history's preeminent black leaders. Yet he was, as well, a leader to millions of white people who learned from him that in degrading black men they degraded themselves." Studying first-person accounts of this history has been an invaluable education and has helped me to better understand the present. We can learn a lot from people who, in many cases, sacrificed their lives for the unencumbered right to vote and for freedom from racial persecution. These rights are still under assault. As Coretta Scott King wrote in her autobiography, "the struggle is a never-ending process. Freedom is never really won." While *Fireflies* acknowledges the heavy cost paid by the freedom fighters, it also reveals their courage and the tenacity of their spirit, a spirit that continues to exist today among those seeking to honor their sacrifice and continue their work.

Civil Rights Movement References in *Fireflies*

August 28, 1955

Emmet Till, a 14-year-old boy from Chicago visiting relatives near Money, Miss., was kidnapped, tortured and murdered. His killers were not convicted, despite the fact that they acknowledged the kidnapping during their criminal trial and also admitted to the murder after their acquittal. The outrage over this event helped to fuel the Civil Rights Movement and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1957. In *Fireflies*, Olivia's telephone conversation with Francine, the mother of a 13-year old boy tortured and murdered by white supremacists, bears several similarities to the murder of Emmet Till. In 2007, a memorial to Till was erected on the banks of the Tallahatchie River, where Till's body was found. It has been defaced with white supremacist writings, destroyed by bullets and stolen four times since its installation. The current memorial sign is made out of bullet-proof material and is monitored by a video security system in an effort to prevent further desecration.



September 15, 1963

Addie Mae Collins, 14; Cynthia Wesley, 14; Carole Robertson, 14; and Carol Denise McNair, 11, four young girls who were attending Sunday School, were killed when the 16th Street Baptist Church was bombed by white supremacist terrorists. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke at the girls' memorial service, stating, "These children, unoffending, innocent, and beautiful—were the victims of one of the most vicious and tragic crimes ever perpetrated against humanity." Although it was known that four Ku Klux Klan members planted the bomb, no prosecutions were conducted until 1977; one of the four men responsible died of old age without ever being tried. The four child victims of this crime are mentioned by name in *Fireflies*, whose opening scene takes place the day after the bombing.



January 30, 1956

Martin Luther King Jr.'s home in Birmingham, Ala., was bombed while his wife Coretta Scott King and their 7-month-old baby, Yolanda, were in the residence. In her autobiography, Coretta Scott King writes, "I learned very early in my life to live with fear for the people that I loved" and "I did not want the police because I could not be sure that they did not know about the bombing before I did." The character Olivia in *Fireflies* suffers from what is now called post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after being exposed to similar bombing attacks.



January 1964

Coretta Scott King (pictured right, 1964), discovered a package sent from the FBI to the Southern Christian Leadership Council office in Atlanta containing surveillance tapes of her husband, purportedly documenting his extramarital affairs. The FBI included an anonymous note threatening to release the material to the public and urging King to commit suicide. Much of the FBI's surveillance material was, in fact, shared with the press, but it did not have the intended effect of discrediting the movement or King. A cursory review of the surveillance files on King reveals that FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover was obsessed with King's sexuality and projected upon him many racist sexual tropes. The FBI's surveillance of King constitutes one of the most egregious abuses of state authority and invasion of privacy of the 20th century.



Artist Biographies



CHRISTIANA CLARK
Olivia

is making her SCR debut. She is a proud Chicago native whose theatre career took shape in the Twin Cities (Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn.) and continued with formal training at The American Academy of Dramatic Arts in LA. She has been a company member of Oregon Shakespeare Festival for the past seven years with credits including *How to Catch Creation*, *The Way the Mountain Moved* (world premiere), *Romeo and Juliet*, *UniSon* (world premiere musical based on yet unpublished poetry of August Wilson), Mary Zimmerman's *The Odyssey*, *The Wiz*, *Hamlet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Into the Woods* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. She appeared off-Broadway in Carlyle Brown's *Pure Confidence* with Mixed Blood Theatre at 59E59 Theatre. Her other notable credits include *Blue* (Penumbra Theatre); Robert Falls' *The Winter's Tale* (Goodman Theatre); *As You Like It* (Guthrie Theater); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare Theatre Company, Washington, D.C.); *The Trinity River Plays* and *The Christiana* (Dallas Center Theatre); *Gleam* (Baltimore Center Stage); *Bulrushes* and *In the Red and Brown Water* (Pillsbury House Theatre); *Othello*, *Il Campiello* and *Endgame* (Ten Thousand Things Theater); *Fucking A* (Frank Theatre); *Constant Star* and *The Left Hand Singing* (Park Square Theatre); *Lost in the Stars* (Skylark Opera); *A Raisin in the Sun* (Starting Gate Theatre) and *Chicago* (Paul Bunyan Playhouse). Her film and television credits include *Stuck Between Stations*, *Captured*, "The Choo Choo Bob Show" and the upcoming Jordan Peele feature, *Say My Name*.



LESTER PURRY
Charles

is making his SCR debut. An award-nominated lead actor, Purry has performed in regional theatres across the country including a national tour as Othello in *Othello*, as Augustus Newcastle in *The Darker Face of the Earth* and as Lester Mason in *The Big White Fog*, all with Guthrie Theater. A longtime company member with Penumbra Theatre, Purry has played the roles

of Cory in *Fences*, Clay in *Dutchman*, Hambone in *Two Trains Running*, Lymon in *The Piano Lesson*, Hedley in *King Hedley II* and Booster in *Jitney*, to name a few. At Baltimore Center Stage, he was Marvell Thunder in *Thunder Knocking on the Door*, as well as King of the Hill in *I Could Stop On a Dime*. He played Lymon in the *The Piano Lesson*, Scarus in *Antony and Cleopatra* and Mordred in *Camelot* at Alabama Shakespeare Festival. Purry performed at Philadelphia Theatre Company as Floyd Barton in *Seven Guitars*, Arizona Theatre Company as Wolf in *Two Trains Running* and as Troy Maxson in *Fences* at Portland Playhouse, Palm Beach Dramaworks and the Los Angeles Performing Arts Center. He also played the role of Aslan in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* at Children's Theatre Company. Most recently, he captivated audiences in the one-man show, *Thurgood*, as Thurgood Marshall to consistently sold-out houses at Geva Theatre Center.

PLAYWRIGHT, DIRECTOR AND DESIGNERS

DONJA R. LOVE (*Playwright*) is Black, Queer, HIV+ and surviving. A Philly native, he's the recipient of the 2018 Laurents/Hatcher Foundation Award and the 2017 Princess Grace Playwriting Award. He's also the Lark Theatre's 2016 Van Lier New Voices Playwriting Fellow, The Playwrights Realm's 2016-17 Writing Fellow and the 2011 Philadelphia Adult Grand Slam Poetry Champion. He has had productions at Manhattan Theatre Club (*Sugar in Our Wounds*) and Atlantic Theater Company (*Fireflies*). He's the co-host of "Off Book," a podcast on Black theatre, and he's the co-founder of The Each-Other Project, an organization that helps build community and provide visibility, through art and advocacy, for LGBTQ People of Color. His other plays include: *one in two*, *soft* and *The Trade*. Follow him on IG: donjarhakymelove and Twitter: donjarlove

LOU BELLAMY (*Director*) is the founder and artistic director emeritus of Penumbra Theatre. During his 40-year tenure, Penumbra evolved into one of America's premier theatres dedicated to dramatic exploration of the African American experience. Under his leadership, Penumbra has grown to be the largest theatre of its kind in America and has produced more than 40 world premieres including August Wilson's first professional production. Bellamy and Penumbra are proud to have produced more of Wilson's plays than any theatre in the world. Bellamy is

an Obie Award-winning director, an accomplished actor and, for 38 years, he served as an associate professor at the University of Minnesota in the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance. Bellamy most recently directed Penumbra's productions of *Pipeline* and *Brothers Paranormal*. His selected directing credits outside of Penumbra include plays at the Logan Square Arts Festival, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Arizona Theatre Company, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Signature Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Guthrie Theater, Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Geva Theatre Center, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Gem Theater, Round House and Hartford Stage.

VICKI SMITH (*Scenic Design*) is pleased to be doing her first production for South Coast Repertory. She has worked for Denver Center for the Performing Arts (54 productions), Arizona Theatre Company, Geva Theatre Center, Penumbra Theatre, Children's Theatre Company, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Cincinnati Playhouse, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Guthrie Theater, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Kansas City Repertory Theatre, Dallas Theatre Center, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, Alley Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Comedy Theatre of Budapest and National Theatre of Miskolc (Hungary), Anchorage Opera, Minnesota Opera, ACT (Seattle), San Jose Repertory Theatre, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Portland Center Stage and others. She received Bay Area Critics Awards for *The Kite Runner* and *Execution of Justice*; a *DramaLogue* Award for *Cyrano*; Colorado Theatre Guild and Denver Ovation awards for *Mariela in the Desert*, *Doubt*, *Plainsong*, *I'm Not Rappaport* and *Pierre*, which was selected for the 2007 Prague Quadrennial Design Exposition. Her work has been shown in two museum exhibitions: "Penumbra Theatre at 40" at the Minnesota History Center and "No Small Parts: The Role of Scale Models in Theater Set Design" at the Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures in Tucson.

DAVID KAY MICKELSEN (*Costume Design*) has designed more than 450 productions at the nation's leading theatres including SCR; Guthrie Theater; Denver Center for the Performing Arts (60 productions); Arizona Theatre Company (47 productions); Cleveland Play House (22 productions); Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park (17 productions); Ford's Theatre (Washington, D.C.); Williamstown Theatre Festival; Berkeley Repertory Theatre; Geffen Playhouse; Pasadena Playhouse; Laguna Playhouse; The Old Globe; San Diego Repertory Theatre; A Contemporary Theatre; the Oregon, Utah, Colorado and Illinois Shakespeare festivals; Studio Arena Theatre; Port-

land Center Stage; Northlight Theatre; Pioneer Theatre Company; Geva Theatre Center; Repertory Theatre of St. Louis; Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis; Tennessee Repertory Theatre; Missouri Repertory Theatre; Sundance Theatre Festival; New Mexico Repertory Theatre; Pennsylvania Center Stage; Florida Stage; The Maltz-Jupiter Theatre; Ensemble Studio Theatre; Irish Repertory Theatre; Theatre of the Open Eye; Jean Cocteau Repertory Theatre; Hampton Playhouse; and Timberlake Playhouse. Mickelsen is the creative director of the theatre costume design program at The Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising. Originally from Canby, Ore., he graduated with an MFA from California Institute of the Arts. He is a member of United Scenic Artists and is the Western Region Board Vice Chair, Local USA 829, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees. davidkaymickelsen.com.

DON DARNUTZER (*Lighting Design*) is designing his first show for South Coast Repertory. His most recent lighting and projection design was for *Dead Man Walking* at the Israel Opera (Tel Aviv). He designed the lighting for the Broadway production of *It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues* and the off-Broadway productions of *Hank Williams: Lost Highway*, *The Immigrant* and *Almost Heaven: John Denver's America*. He has designed for Guthrie Theater, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Arizona Theatre Company, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, The Shakespeare Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Cleveland Play House, Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Penumbra Theatre, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, The Old Globe, Mark Taper Forum, Alley Theatre, Dallas Theatre Center, Coconut Grove Playhouse, Saint Louis Repertory, TheatreWorks, Northlight Theatre, Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis, Palm Beach Opera, Portland Opera, New Orleans Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Atlanta Opera, Central City Opera, Minnesota Opera and Opera Grand Rapids.

SCOTT W. EDWARDS (*Sound Design*) is making his SCR design debut. He grew up in the Minneapolis theatre scene. He was Children's Theatre Company's resident sound designer for eight years and Guthrie Theater's resident sound designer for 21 years, designing 140 productions and working with artists from all over the world. He has worked with many theatres in the Twin Cities including Penumbra Theatre, Mixed Blood Theatre and The Jungle Theatre, as well as many regional theatres around the country. He was a founding member of Myron Johnson's Ballet of the Dolls and the live sound engineer and production manager for Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion*. Recently, he worked on Mark Rylance's and Louis Jenkins' *Nice Fish*, which premiered

in London's West End. His honors and awards include a 2018-19 McKnight Theater Artist Fellowship; San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award for *The Kite Runner* (San Jose Repertory Theatre); *Minneapolis Star Tribune* Outstanding Sound Designer Award for *Pride and Prejudice* and *The Pirates of Penzance* (both at the Guthrie Theater); and a Helen Hayes Award nomination for *You Can't Take It With You* (Arena Stage).

JEFFREY ELIAS TEETER (*Projections*) graduated from California Institute of the Arts and has worked on numerous productions throughout the world. His design work includes *Silent Sky* and *Holmes and Watson* (Arizona Theatre Company); *The Gospel According to Thomas Jefferson, Charles Dickens and Count Leo Tolstoy: Discord* (Arizona Theatre Center, Geffen Playhouse, NoHo Arts Center); *Love Has No Labels* (national public service announcement; Emmy Award, "Outstanding Commercial"); Cheryl Burke's *Love on the Floor* (Orb Theatre, Tokyo); *Marvel's Avengers S.T.A.T.I.O.N.* (Paris and Las Vegas Interactive Discovery Center); *On the Spectrum* and *Cyrano* (Fountain Theatre, Ovation Award for Video Design); *Baby It's You*, written and directed by Floyd Mutrux (Broadhurst Theatre, Broadway); lighting director for Halloween Horror Nights, NBC Universal Studios Hollywood and AMC premieres; *Brewsie & Willie* (Center for New Performance and Poor Dog Group); *All That Skate*, an international ice skating show (Staples Center); *Piedra de Sol*, directed by Maria Morett (Getty Villa); *Kirk Douglas: Before I Forget* (Kirk Douglas Theatre); *Apollo* (Portland Center Stage, Smithsonian Collection); *Norman's Ark* (John Anson Ford Amphitheatre); *Mycenaean* (Brooklyn Academy of Music Festival); and *11 Septembre 2001* (REDCAT; National Theatre of Paris). His other projects include *The Leading Matters* and *Stanford Challenge* national tour, Audubon Shark Exhibit and *The Sazerac House*.

MACELLE MAHALA (*Dramaturg*) writes about the intersection of theatre, performance, race and social justice. She is the author of *Penumbra: The Premier Stage for African American Drama* (University of Minnesota Press,

2013), which received Honorable Mention for the 2014 Errol Hill Award for Outstanding Scholarship in African American Theatre Studies. Her second book, *Shaping the City: African American Theatre Institutions and Urban Arts Ecologies*, is currently under contract with Northwestern University Press. Her essay "Asserting Black Subjectivity on the German Stage," was published in the critical anthology *After Failure: New Essays on the Cultural Politics and Philosophy of Failure in Performance and Theatre* (Routledge, 2019). Her other writing has appeared in *Theatre Journal*; *Theatre Topics*; *Continuum: The Journal of African Diaspora Drama, Theatre, and Performance*; *Women & Performance*; and *XCP: Cross Cultural Poetics*. As a theatre artist, she has worked with Artists in Storefronts, The Illusion Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, New World Theatre, The New York Mills Cultural Arts Center, Penumbra Theatre, Pillsbury House Theatre, The San Francisco Mime Troupe, The Soap Factory and Works/Plays. She currently serves as director of the Humanities Center and is associate professor of English and Media X at the University of the Pacific.

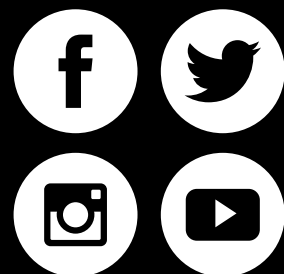
ALYSSA ESCALANTE (*Stage Manager*) is a proud Actors' Equity Association stage manager based in Los Angeles. Her recent credits include *M. Butterfly*, *Photograph 51*, *Culture Clash (Still) in America*, *Gem of the Ocean* (South Coast Repertory); *The Bacchae, theatre is a blank page* (SITI Company); *Hold These Truths* (San Diego Repertory/Pasadena Playhouse); *A Streetcar Named Desire, Mojada: a Medea in Los Angeles, Happy Days* (Boston Court Pasadena); *The Haunted House Party* (Troubadour Theatre Company); *Criers for Hire* (East West Players); *Cash on Delivery* (El Portal Theatre); and *Placas: The Most Dangerous Tattoo* (U.S. tour). Much love to the keepers of her sanity: Mom, Dad and Hannah Minerva.

DAVID IVERS (*Artistic Director*) is responsible for the overall artistic operation of the theatre. He started at SCR this past March and the 2019-20 season is the first that he has programmed here. Prior to SCR, he was artistic director for Arizona Theatre Company and, before that, served more than 20 years as an actor and director at

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Utah Shakespeare Festival, with the last six as artistic director. He was a resident artist at Denver Center for the Performing Arts for a decade, acting in and/or directing more than 40 plays and has helmed productions at many of the nation's leading regional theatres including the Guthrie Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre and South Coast Repertory. His early career included serving as associate artistic director of Portland Repertory Theatre and he appeared in productions at some of the nation's top regional theatres including Portland Center Stage and the Oregon, Alabama and Idaho Shakespeare festivals. He taught at the University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, Southern Utah University and Southern Oregon University. He earned his BA from Southern Oregon University and his MFA from the University of Minnesota.

PAULA TOMEI (*Managing Director*) is responsible for the overall administration of SCR. She has been managing director since 1994 and a member of SCR's staff since 1979. She is a past president of the board of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization for theatre. In addition, she served as treasurer of TCG, vice president of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and as a member of the LORT Negotiating Committee for industry-wide union agreements. She represents SCR at national conferences of TCG and LORT and served as a theatre panelist and site visitor for the National Endowment for the Arts and the California Arts Council. Her teaching background includes a graduate class in non-profit management at UC Irvine (UCI) and as a guest lecturer in the graduate school of business at Stanford. She was appointed by the chancellor to UCI's Community Arts Council and serves on the Dean's Leadership Society Executive Committee for the School of Social Sciences at UCI. She is also on the board of Arts Orange County, the county-wide arts council, and the board of the Nicholas Endowment. She graduated from UCI with a degree in economics and pursued an additional course of study in theatre and dance. In March 2017, she received the Mayor's Award from the City of Costa Mesa for her contributions to the arts community. In 2018, she received the Helena Modjeska Cultural Legacy Award from Arts Orange County. Most recently, she was awarded UCI's Distinguished Alumna in the School of Social Sciences at the Lauds & Laurels Celebration in May 2019.

MARTIN BENSON (*Founding Artistic Director*), co-founder of SCR, has directed nearly one-fourth of SCR's

productions. In 2008, he and David Emmes received the Margo Jones Award for their lifetime commitment to theatre excellence and fostering the art and craft of American playwriting. They also accepted SCR's 1988 Tony Award for Outstanding Resident Professional Theatre and won the 1995 Theatre LA Ovation Award for Lifetime Achievement. Benson has received the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for Distinguished Achievement in Directing an unparalleled seven times for George Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara*, *Misalliance* and *Heartbreak House*; John Millington Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*; Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*; Sally Nemeth's *Holy Days*; and the world premiere of Margaret Edson's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Wit*, which he also directed at Seattle Repertory Theatre and Houston's Alley Theatre. He has directed American classics such as *A Streetcar Named Desire* and has distinguished himself in staging contemporary work including the critically acclaimed California premiere of William Nicholson's *Shadowlands*. He directed revivals of Beth Henley's *Abundance* and Horton Foote's *The Trip to Bountiful*; and Samuel D. Hunter's *The Whale and Rest* (world premiere); *The Whipping Man* by Matthew Lopez; and *The Roommate* by Jen Silverman (west coast premiere). Benson received his BA in theatre from San Francisco State University.

DAVID EMMES (*Founding Artistic Director*) is co-founder of South Coast Repertory. He received the Margo Jones Award for his lifetime commitment to theatre excellence and to fostering the art of American playwriting. In addition, he has received numerous awards for productions he has directed during his SCR career. He directed the world premieres of Amy Freed's *Safe in Hell*, *The Beard of Avon* and *Freedomland*; Thomas Babe's *Great Day in the Morning*; Keith Reddin's *Rum and Coke* and *But Not for Me*; and Neal Bell's *Cold Sweat*; the American premieres of Terry Johnson's *Unsuitable for Adults*; and Joe Penhall's *Dumb Show*; and the Southland premiere of *Top Girls* (at SCR and the Westwood Playhouse). Other productions he has directed include *Red*, *New England*, *Arcadia*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Woman in Mind* and *You Never Can Tell*, which he restaged for the Singapore Festival of Arts. He has served as a theatre panelist and onsite evaluator for the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as a panelist for the California Arts Council. After attending Orange Coast College, he received his BA and MA from San Francisco State University and his PhD from USC.



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The Scenic, Costume, Lighting and Sound Designers in LORT theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists Local USA-829, IATSE.



The Director is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, Inc., an independent national labor union.